

22 May 2024

Mr Gerard Hayes
Secretary
Health Services Union
Locked Bag 3
Australia Square NSW 1215

Dear Gerard

Move of Immunology Sutherland to the NSWHP Randwick site in 2024

This letter is to provide a further update on the staff consultation that has been occurring between NSWHP, the HSU and staff representatives from the Immunology Laboratory at Sutherland.

I have attached letters sent to the HSU on 12 September 2023, 30 November 2023 and 7 February 2024 in relation to consultation activities to date.

Since this time NSW Health Pathology held another USCC meeting on 6 March 2024 with the HSU representative Randall Millington and staff from the Immunology Laboratory. At this meeting NSW Health Pathology were asked to respond to a number of questions which I will outline here.

Why can't a pathologist be employed at Sutherland

To ensure Accreditation requirements are met, the Immunology department cannot reside in a Branch Laboratory. The requirements of a GX laboratory must be met, including ~~A pathologist could be employed at Sutherland but as we want the Immunology Laboratory to be a GX Laboratory the laboratory needs to be~~ being co-located with other specialties including Chemical Pathology, Anatomical Pathology, Microbiology and Haematology. Equally, the Immunology Clinics are based at Prince of Wales Hospital, therefore having the laboratory co-located with the clinics ensures that the pathologists have ongoing access to the clinics and other clinicians at Prince of Wales that interact with the Immunology Clinics.

How expanding of the testing area is going to work when the new space is not large enough.

Some of the current testing will be moved on to the new Chemical Pathology analysers allowing removal of one BN2 instrument. This will free up laboratory space for future expansion of testing profile. Equally, while the types of tests could be expanded, the expectation is that these tests will be undertaken on the current equipment. Capital expenditure budget has been allocated to the purchase of an Optilite for Immunology to improve efficiency of testing with automation and allow for expansion of the testing profile for Immunology.

WHS issues with heat and noise.

Once the laboratory has moved to Randwick noise testing (environmental testing) will be undertaken. If these tests report that the noise is too high NSW Health Pathology will look at introducing suitable noise dampening mitigation such as:

- Foam noise absorbing baffles (these hang from the ceiling)

- Replacement of ceiling tiles
- Wall panels that absorb sound

Note: Since this meeting NSWHP has reviewed the decision to wait until after the move to install wall padding to reduce the noise and have advised staff that padding will be put in place in advance of the equipment moving. Additional questions have been asked about there being an 'echo' around some equipment. ~~and the Senior Operations Manager is in discussions with the insulation company about this concern.~~ As such, padding and ceiling panels have been approved for installation as part of the laboratory renovation work.

The air conditioning at Prince of Wales was upgraded in 2023 and can be adjusted as required. We will assess this once the staff have moved to the new location.

Samples coming from POW and Sutherland what about the rest of the catchment area eg GBM test from Wollongong.

As we have advised previously 40% of tests come from Randwick and 15% of tests come from Sutherland. This means that currently 85% of tests need to be transported to Sutherland. With the change only 60% of tests will need to be transported to another location.

Any urgent tests such as the GMB test, if coming from Wollongong they would be managed as they currently are and would be sent to Randwick in an urgent taxi and if required staff would need to be called in to undertake this test.

NOTE: The GMB test has a 24-hour turnaround time therefore there is sufficient time to transport this test from Wollongong to Randwick.

Car parking for staff.

At the meeting held on 6 March 2024 date staff were advised:

As previously advised the concerns around parking for staff who have a current pass at Sutherland has been escalated to the Ministry of Health. The local area has street parking available, like the Sutherland Hospital area.

Note: Since this last meeting with the HSU NSWHP have been advised that as the parking is managed by a private company staff will need to put their names on the list as per all staff who work on the Randwick Campus.

Budget for the move including refurbishing works ie plumbing, electrical, painting etc.

NSW Health Pathology will pay for the relevant work to be undertaken.

Will there be the same waste bins and cleaning service as Sutherland.

NSW Health Pathology has a contract with the cleaning services at Prince of Wales that provide appropriate cleaning across the site and this is the same contract that is held by all of South East Sydney LHD.

- Currently all laboratories at Randwick on level 4 are serviced by the hospital cleaners and include: Emptying of general waste bins and general cleaning first thing in the morning

- Waste management is undertaken regularly throughout the day
- There is an additional waste bin collection in the afternoon.

The process at Randwick is that if Laboratory staff fill a large bin, the cleaning staff will take it out to the waste room on the level 4 corridor and replace it with an empty bin. This is also the process with the confidential waste bins.

Note: Since this meeting NSWHP has reviewed the bins at Sutherland and the process at Randwick and all bins will be able to be taken to Randwick and used in the same way as used at Sutherland.

Locker and lunchroom space as per the award.

As advised previously all staff will be provided with a locker as per Award requirements.

In relation to meal rooms, there are 4 meal rooms on Level 4 in Randwick. This includes Chemistry, Haematology, Microbiology and Anatomical Pathology totaling 75.38 metres squared.

The busiest times for the Level 4 area is Monday to Friday and the busiest hour is between 12.00 and 1.00pm on a Thursday with 196 staff on site during this time. This would include both morning and evening staff being at work during this cross-over time. If I averaged the number of staff during peak times across the week the highest average is 186 staff at work on a Thursday.

Using the time periods of 11.00am to 2.00pm as meal periods we would have 6 x 30-minute meal breaks with an average of 186 staff at work which would mean an average of 31 staff taking a meal break during each of the 6 time periods. If this is how we calculated it that would mean each staff member would have 2.43 metres squared for each staff member.

Using the time periods of 12 midday to 2.00pm as meal periods we would have 4 x 30-minute meal breaks with the same average of 186 staff at work and an average of 46 staff on their meal break at the same time with each staff member having 1.64 metres squared for each staff member.

If we then include the 17 staff from Immunology (with at least 1 staff member being on leave at any one time) using the 4 meal break times and hence an additional 4 staff using the meal room during the 12 midday to 2.00pm timeframe, we would then have each staff member using 1.51 metres squared.

Noting that the calculation has presumed that all staff are working a day shift but the reality is that approximately 20 staff are the evening staff so it is most likely 1.64 metres per staff member.

And as the HSU would be aware the Award requirement is 1 metre square per staff member.

What are the cost savings.

The move to the Randwick Campus is not a cost savings activity it is in relation to providing a better service to the patients of South East Sydney by developing the Immunology Laboratory into a GX Laboratory which will see it expand in its testing capacity, growing its research and collaborating with other GX Laboratories on site.

This information was discussed with staff at the monthly consultation meeting and a copy of the details were provided to all Immunology staff.

Other consultation that has occurred with the staff to date includes:

- 14 December 2023 all staff meeting discussing change management and discussing how staff are feeling about the move (supported by Donna Brown, NSWHP Change Manager)
- 18 January 2024 all staff meeting – commencement of monthly project update meetings
- January 2024 staff undertook a tour of Randwick Laboratory – walk through new space with ‘dummy’ analyser layout and tour of Level 4 Campus Centre.
- Monthly meetings with Immunology team with the Senior Operations Manager
- Ongoing consultation and discussion in relation to the layout of the laboratory, moving requirements and adhoc discussions in relation to other aspects of the move.

NSWHP will continue to work with the staff and support them in this transition and developing the new space on the Randwick Campus.

NSW Health Pathology has established a project team led by Teresa Hewlett, A/Senior Operations Manager South East Sydney to progress the move to the Randwick Campus and is actively working with the staff in transitioning to the Randwick Campus.

If you have any queries please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Siobhan Cunliffe
Associate Director of HR Metro
NSW Health Pathology